

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A flare stopper to be installed in a lens barrel for holding a taking lens, an inner periphery ~~for~~ of the flare stopper defining a circular opening to pass incident light upon said taking lens being formed in said flare stopper, said flare stopper comprising a sheet material having an overall shape defined by first and second sections;

wherein the first section of the sheet material has a shape of a planar ring, and the second section of the sheet material has a shape of a side face of a circular truncated cone, with an outermost portion of the second section meeting an innermost portion of the first section, and

wherein an innermost portion of the second section defines said circular inner periphery having the form of a side face of a circular truncated cone.

2. (currently amended) A flare stopper as recited in claim 1, wherein said ~~flare stopper~~ sheet material is ~~made of a~~ phosphor bronze plate and the overall shape of the flare stopper is produced by sheet metal stamping.

3. (original) A flare stopper as recited in claim 2, wherein the thickness of said phosphor bronze plate is approximately 0.03 mm.

4. (currently amended) A flare stopper as recited in claim 1, wherein said ~~flare stopper~~ sheet material is ~~made of~~ Mylar (trade name) film and the overall shape of the flare stopper is produced by sheet metal stamping.

5. (currently amended) A flare stopper as recited in claim 4, wherein the thickness of said Mylar film is approximately 0.03 to 0.05 mm.

6. (currently amended) A taking lens unit comprising:
a lens barrel;
plural lens elements contained in said lens barrel; and
a flare stopper disposed between said lens elements,
~~wherein~~ an inner periphery ~~for~~ of the flare stopper defining a circular opening to pass incident light upon said taking lens unit ~~is formed~~, said flare stopper comprising a sheet material having an overall shape defined by first and second sections;

wherein the first section of the sheet material has a shape of a planar ring, and the second section of the sheet material has a shape of a side face of a circular truncated cone,

with an outermost portion of the second section meeting an innermost portion of the first section, and

wherein an innermost portion of the second section defines said circular inner periphery ~~is inclined with respect to an optical axis of said taking lens unit.~~

7. (original) A taking lens unit as recited in claim 6, further comprising:

a spacer disposed between said lens elements, wherein said flare stopper in said taking lens unit is attached to said spacer.

8. (currently amended) A taking lens unit as recited in claim 6, wherein said ~~flare stopper~~ sheet material ~~is made of a~~ phosphor bronze plate and the overall shape of the flare stopper is produced by sheet metal stamping.

9. (original) A taking lens unit as recited in claim 8, wherein the thickness of said phosphor bronze plate is approximately 0.03 mm.

10. (currently amended) A taking lens unit as recited in claim 6, wherein said ~~flare stopper~~ sheet material ~~is made of~~ Mylar (trade name) film and the overall shape of the flare stopper is produced by sheet metal stamping.

11. (currently amended) A taking lens unit as recited in claim 10, wherein the thickness of said Mylar film is approximately 0.03 to 0.05 mm.

12. (currently amended) A taking lens unit as recited in claim 10, wherein the flare stopper and one of the lens elements are arranged so that one of said lens elements presses and deforms said flare stopper so that said inner periphery is inclined with respect to said optical axis of said taking lens unit.

13. (previously presented) A taking lens unit as recited in claim 6, wherein said flare stopper is nipped and held between a first of said lens elements and a spacer, the spacer being arranged between the first lens element and another of the lens elements.

14-20. (canceled)

21. (new) The taking lens of claim 6, wherein the second section of the sheet material is not in contact with any of the plural lens elements.

22. (new) The taking lens of claim 7, wherein the flare stopper makes contact with only the spacer.

23. (new) The flare stopper of claim 1, wherein the sheet material is one of a plate and a film.

24. (new) The taking lens of claim 6, wherein the sheet material is one of a plate and a film.

25. (new) A taking lens unit comprising:
a lens barrel;
plural lens elements contained in said lens barrel; and
a flare stopper disposed between said lens elements, an inner periphery of the flare stopper defining a circular opening to pass incident light upon said taking lens unit

wherein said circular inner periphery is defined by a portion of the flare stopper that is inclined with respect to an optical axis of said taking lens unit; and

wherein the flare stopper and one of the lens elements are arranged so that one of said lens elements presses and deforms said flare stopper so that said inner periphery is inclined with respect to said optical axis of said taking lens unit.